

Message Text

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ACTION IO-10

INFO OCT-01 CIAE-00 CU-04 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-15 EUR-12

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R 121859Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3071

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 23607

NESCO

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AORG, OCON, UNESCO

SUBJECT: UNESCO 98 EXBD: AGENDA ITEMS 4.2 AND 6.1:

BUDGET PREPARATION AND GENERAL CONFERENCE
PROCEDURES

1. PERMDEL VIEWS REQUESTED REFTEL ON ADVISABILITY OF ABOLISHING PROVISIONAL BUDGET CEILING ARE THAT IN PRACTICAL TERMS ABANDONMENT OF CURRENT PRACTICE, DESPITE ITS FAULTS, WOULD PROBABLY NOT PRODUCE ANY IMPROVEMENT AND INDEED MIGHT RISK LOSING ALREADY TENUOUS INFLUENCE ON KEEPING BUDGET WITHIN REASONABLE LIMITS. PERMDEL HAS INFORMALLY DISCUSSED WITH OTHER BIG DONORS IN GENEVA GROUP MEETING SEPTEMBER 10, PROS AND CONS OF REFORM SUGGESTIONS OF BUDGETARY PROCEDURES CONTAINED IN DOCUMENT 98 EX/16, PARA 6, PART III, SECTION A. STRONG SUPPORT FOR RETENTION OF PROVISIONAL BUDGET CEILING ESTABLISHED AT OUTSET OF GC WAS PRELIMINARY REACTION EXPRESSED BY OTHER GC PERMDELS.

2. DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION ALSO DRAWN TO DOCUMENT 98 EX/5 PART III, PAGE 97 AS HAVING IMPORTANT BEARING ON BUDGETARY METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES AND LIKELY TO RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION AT BOARD SESSION.

3. BASIC FAULT OF CURRENT PRACTICE OF VOTING

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PROVISIONAL BUDGET CEILING AT BEGINNING OF GENERAL

CONFERENCE AND ONLY THEN ON CONTENT OF PROGRAM HAS OBVIOUS DISADVANTAGE OF PUTTING CART BEFORE HORSE. IT WOULD INDEED SEEM MORE LOGICAL THAT ORDER BE REVERSED IN ORDER TO SUBJECT PROGRAM TO CLOSEST POSSIBLE SCRUTINY AND THEREBY ARRIVING AT MUCH MORE TIGHTLY DEFINED AND CONTROLLED PROGRAM-BUDGET PACKAGE. FURTHER, DOCUMENT 98 EX/16 NOTES THAT PROVISIONAL BUDGETARY CEILING DEBATE GENERATES CONSIDERABLE PASSION AT VERY OUTSET OF GENERAL CONFERENCE.

4. HOWEVER, SEEMING LOGIC OF EXAMINING PROGRAM FIRST AND ONLY AFTER ARRIVING AT BUDGET WOULD IN OUR ESTIMATION BE UNWORKABLE IN PRACTICE BECAUSE OF ACTUAL, AS DISTINCT FROM IDEAL, GENERAL CONFERENCE FUNCTIONING,

5. GENERAL CONFERENCE IS IN ESSENCE MARKED BY FREQUENTLY CONTRADICTORY CLAIMS FOR PROGRAM EMPHASIS IN BUDGETARY PRIORITIES OF 136 MEMBER STATES. PERMDEL EXPERIENCE IN THE EXBD AND GC IS THAT BOARD MEMBERS AND GENERAL CONFERENCE DELEGATIONS OFTEN SPEND INORDINATE AMOUNT OF TIME ON RELATIVELY MINOR PROGRAMS AND SUMS. FEW MEMBER STATES HAVE EXPERTISE OR INCLINATION TO UNDERTAKE RIGOROUS EXAMINATION OF THE PROGRAM. MOREOVER, LDC'S WHO MAKE UP MAJORITY OF MEMBER STATES ARE NOTABLY UNWILLING TO HEED ARGUMENTS FROM BIG DONOR STATES FOR BUDGETARY RESTRAINT.

6. INDEED, PROVISIONAL BUDGETARY CEILING ESTABLISHED AT OUTSET OF GC HAS PROVIDED VALUABLE ARGUMENT AGAINST COSTLY PROJECTS BEING INTRODUCED AS ADDITIONS TO C/5 DRAFT PROGRAM AND BUDGET. AT 18 GC, FOR EXAMPLE, PERMDEL WAS ABLE TO DISSUADE ARABS AND SPANISH SPEAKING MEMBER STATES FROM INSISTING ON IMMEDIATE INCREASE IN THE USE OF THESE LANGUAGES IN UNESCO (AND SETTLE FOR STUDIES ON BROADER USAGE) ON GROUNDS THAT COST WOULD SHATTER PROVISIONAL CEILING OF \$169.9 MILLION ON BUDGET AND WITH IT VERY FRAGILE MEMBER STATE CONSENSUS OF SUPPORT FOR BUDGET.

7. WITHOUT BUDGET CEILING ESTABLISHED AT OUTSET
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THERE WOULD BE STRONG RISK THAT INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES WOULD FEEL FREE TO PROPOSE COSTLY ADD-ONS. VOTE AT END OF GC ON BUDGET CEILING MIGHT BE MARKED BY EVEN GREATER BITTERNESS OF DEBATE AND GREATLY INFLATED PROGRAM BEING ADOPTED IN ANY CASE.

8. PROVISIONAL BUDGETARY CEILING FIXED AT OUTSET OF GC AT LEAST ESTABLISHES RELATIVELY FIRM REFERENCE POINT, IF

NOT ABSOLUTE LIMIT, ON COST OF UNESCO PROGRAM LIMITING

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ACTION IO-10

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TOTAL COST.

9. PERMDEL VIEWS DOCUMENT 98 EX/16 PROPOSALS AS INDICATION THAT DG AND SECRETARIAT MAY BE LEANING TOWARDS ESTABLISHING MINIMUM-MAXIMUM FIGURES FOR BUDGET WITH DIFFERENCE PROVIDING A SAFETY MARGIN TO ACCOMMODATE PROGRAM ADD-ONS INTRODUCED IN THE COURSE OF GC.

10. IN SUM, PERMDEL BELIEVES THAT ROLE OF EXBD IN CONTROLLING PROVISIONAL BUDGETARY CEILINGS SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED. ALTHOUGH LDC'S HAVE CLEAR MAJORITY, VOTING BALANCE IS MUCH MORE FAVORABLE AND MORE MANAGEABLE THAN AT THE GENERAL CONFERENCE. US SHOULD NOT ARBITRARILY BE OPPOSED TO ANY PROGRAM INCREASES, PARTICULARLY IF THEY FIT INTO OVERALL US STRATEGIES TOWARD BUILDING BRIDGES AND AVOIDING UNNECESSARY CONFRONTATION WITH THE "THIRD WORLD" COUNTRIES WHO RELY STRONGLY ON UNESCO. HOWEVER, WE SHOULD SUPPORT BUDGETARY PROCEDURES THAT PERMIT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE CONTROL MECHANISM POSSIBLE AGAINST DEMANDS FOR PROGRAM AND BUDGET INCREASES WHICH, AFTER CAREFUL ANALYSIS, ARE NOT IN ACCORD WITH US INTEREST. INCREASED COMPETENCE AND INFLUENCE OF EXBD

IN SETTING BUDGET CEILINGS IS VALUABLE FIRST LINE OF
DEFENSE.

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